

# AGING WELL, NUTRITION, AND THE MEDITERRANEAN LIFESTYLE IN ITALY

STUDY ABROAD SUMMER 2026



The Mediterranean dietary pattern—rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, poultry, seafood, and extra-virgin olive oil—is consistently ranked among the healthiest in the world. Certain regions of Italy exemplify its benefits, with healthy aging populations and unusually high numbers of centenarians. Recognizing both its health and cultural significance, UNESCO has designated the Mediterranean Diet and lifestyle as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This study abroad program offers students the chance to experience the Mediterranean lifestyle firsthand and explore how nutrition, cuisine, food environments, and traditions in Italy influence health and longevity. Students will compare urban and rural lifestyle patterns while engaging directly with local culture.

Destinations include Rome, Sorrento, Maiori (Amalfi Coast), Matera—famous for its “negative architecture”—and Puglia, known for its breads, pastas, fruits, and olive oil. Additional visits in southern Italy include Pompeii and Cilento (Pisciotta), with hands-on culinary experiences that bring Mediterranean principles to life. The program also extends to northern Italy, with stops in Florence, Parma, the Alpi Apuane mountains (Pruno), and Venice, highlighting regional food and cultural diversity. Students will also attend local church services in Salerno, Castellammare di Stabia, and Modena.

The program combines (1) physical activities such as hiking, walking, and kayaking; (2) discussions on nutrition and human health, including Mediterranean lifestyle, physical activity, social interactions, and chronic disease prevention; (3) local cuisine; (4) visits to food production sites; and (5) guided and self-guided cultural and historical tours. Experiences include visits to lemon groves, dairy farms, bakeries, olive farms, fruit orchards, and museums.

Important: This is a fast-paced program with significant physical activity. All majors may apply, though preference is given to students pursuing the Gerontology minor and those who have completed NDFS 100: Essentials of Human Nutrition.

## DATES

1 July–31 July, 2026

## **HOUSING**

Students will be staying in hotels across Italy.

## **COURSES**

Students will enroll in the following courses:

NDFS 390R—Special Topics in Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science.

HLTH 466—Health and the Aging Process. Both courses can be used as electives for the Gerontology minor.

## **COST**

\$7,400–7,900

Includes Latter-day Saint undergraduate full tuition (increased cost for graduate and non-Latter-day Saint students), housing, in-country travel, entrance fees, and international health insurance coverage. Does not include international airfare, preparation course tuition, or personal expenses. As food tasting is an important part of this program, many meals will be included in the program cost (30 breakfasts, 11 lunches, 23 dinners).

## **TRAVEL**

Students are responsible for purchasing their own airfare to and from the program sites. Airline reservations must be made through BYU Travel. Students should contact a BYU Travel agent: BYU Travel | 280 HRCB | (801) 422-6293 | [travel@byu.edu](mailto:travel@byu.edu).

## **PREPARATION**

Any major may apply. Preference will be given to students who are interested in earning the Gerontology minor and who have taken NDFS 100. Admitted students are required to participate in an international, cross-cultural preparation course (IAS 201R, 1 credit hour). This evening course will be held during the second block of winter semester. Part-time and non-BYU students will need to pay an additional tuition fee for enrolling in the prep class. Accompanying spouses must be credit-bearing participants on the program; they will need to apply online and take the preparation course. Students must meet all country and program specific COVID and health requirements for travel.

## **FUNDING SOURCES**

Regular BYU tuition scholarships, Pell Grants, and Federal Insured Student Loans may be applied to study abroad programs. Students who submit the financial aid section of the ISP application and who have a current FAFSA form on file at the Financial Aid Office (A-41 ASB) will be considered for a study abroad scholarship. Private grants and scholarships outside of BYU may also assist (see [kennedy.byu.edu/scholarships](http://kennedy.byu.edu/scholarships)).

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Students must be 18 years of age or older to participate. Complete the online application at [kennedy.byu.edu/apply](http://kennedy.byu.edu/apply). A nonrefundable \$35 application fee is required. Applicants will be interviewed once the application is complete. Students will be notified via e-mail of their acceptance into the program. The first payment is due upon acceptance.

**Priority Application Deadline: 1 November 2025**

**Final Application Deadline: 1 December 2025**

## **FACULTY**

Chad Hancock, professor in the Department of Nutrition, Dietetics, and Food Science. 801-422-7588 | [chad\\_hancock@byu.edu](mailto:chad_hancock@byu.edu)  
Ray Merrill, professor in the Department of Public Health. 801-422-9788 | [ray\\_merrill@byu.edu](mailto:ray_merrill@byu.edu)

## **INTERESTED STUDENTS SHOULD CONTACT**

International Study Programs | 101 HRCB | (801) 422-3686 | [isp@byu.edu](mailto:isp@byu.edu) | [kennedy.byu.edu/isp](http://kennedy.byu.edu/isp)

## **PROGRAM ADJUSTMENTS**

International Study Programs (ISP) reserves the right to cancel this program, revise its offerings, or make any adjustments to the preliminary cost. If it becomes necessary for ISP to cancel a program, all program payments made to BYU ISP will be refunded to the student's BYU financial account. ISP is the only office authorized to cancel any of its programs.